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Letter dated 15 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward the attached statement of the Government of Eritrea issued today, 15 June 2000, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Haile **Menkerios**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 15 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Government of Eritrea

The Government of Eritrea strongly deplored Ethiopia's declaration of war against Eritrea in May 1998 and the invasion that it has perpetrated for more than a month now. This war, and its continuation in any form, remain both unnecessary and avoidable with no justification or benefits whatsoever other than the incurring of an enormous loss of life and destruction of property. Who has gained or lost in this war? Which side has emerged victorious and which side was defeated? We shall not rush into conclusions for the sake of public consumption or on the basis of sheer emotions. Time and history will attest the truth and we can wait for that judgement in patience.

The Government of Eritrea has consistently rejected, from the outset, the imposition of a solution through war and force, choosing instead the path of peace and legality. This is illustrated by the positive positions it took, at various junctures, in regard to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) peace proposals. The positive and constructive stance that it took at the proximity talks in Algiers, convened while the war was raging, is another evidence of its position, corroborated by the events and documents of the proceedings of the peace talks. The fact is the Government of Eritrea did not hesitate to accept without equivocation and delay the OAU proposals on ceasefire and the redeployment of troops.

Not only do ceasefire and the redeployment of troops constitute key provisions of the OAU peace documents, but they are also vital for terminating the war and the logic of force which have no justification or meaning. They will also pave the way for the ultimate resolution of the dispute through peaceful and legal means. These are precisely the reasons why Eritrea has been advocating for a cessation of hostilities from the beginning and why it accepted the current OAU proposal promptly and without equivocation.

If the end of war and the redeployment of troops are acceptable as a first step, the OAU agreement must be signed. The enforcement of the provisions of the agreement should also be verified on the ground in the shortest possible time. Both sides must also proceed to implement the subsequent measures of the peace process without prevarication and with the requisite good faith and seriousness.

The Government of Eritrea reaffirms to the Eritrean people and the international community that it will persist in its firm stance regarding a peaceful and legal resolution to the conflict and that it will continue to work constructively, with the necessary patience and precautions, to implement the agreement on ceasefire and redeployment of troops as well as the subsequent components of the OAU peace package.

Asmara
15 June 2000